

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity
24 September, Anno Domini 2017
St. Matthew 6:24-34
Pr. Kurt Ulmer

In the Name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Life is far more important than what you're going to have for dinner or whether or not you wore that outfit within the last week or how much money you're going to be able to save up for retirement. Why then do you worry about these things? Why do such superficial things consume so many of our waking hours? Worrying is for pagans because pagans don't know a loving Heavenly Father who cares for them. You do.

Whatever we may tell ourselves and others to rationalize our worries away, the fact of the matter is, we don't trust God as we ought. We are forever second guessing him, assuming that we, who don't even know what we're going to have for breakfast in the morning, know better what is needed than the one who had counted the hairs on our head before the foundations of the world. When crosses come, we call God's faithfulness into question. When we don't have the creaturely comforts we desire we get restless and irritable. When we can't do everything we want or think we should do, we grumble against God. We whine. We worry. We doubt. Rarely, if ever, are we simply content with what God has given and what He has withheld. We constantly orient our children and ourselves toward being and doing and having great things while the things of eternal life receiving passing consideration at best. We run ourselves into the ground trying to figure out some grand purpose that we have in the universe.

Look at the lilies. What grand purpose do they have? They don't have to be so varied and beautiful to carry out their purpose. But God clothes them in beauty that is able to take your breath away, a beauty that nothing man has created can even begin to compare. They don't worry. They are content to be simply what and how God has made them. They don't long to be or have something else or better. They simply are. What God does with them is of no concern to them. If they are to be mown over tomorrow as you mow your lawn, so be it. If they are to be violently ripped out of the ground because someone, somewhere has designated them a weed, so be it. They don't care. They simply are. They won't protest and cry "Unfair!"

But, for all their beauty, they weren't created in God's image. They didn't walk with God in the cool of the day. The Son of God didn't take on their substance when He came down into the midst of creation. He took on your substance, your flesh. Jesus didn't die for flowers or sparrows, but for you. God has redeemed you. God has lifted up His countenance upon you. You were created for far more than living today and being mowed over and consumed by death tomorrow. You were created to live in God's presence forever, to bear the image of God, to know Him, and love Him.

Repent. You can't have your worries. Not a single one of them. They are sinful and demonic. None of them are justifiable before God. They are just another word for unbelief. They declare that your Father is a liar who fails to keep His promises to you. They expose the reality that the object of your worrying is your god, the thing your heart takes comfort in. "How can I do without such and such? I really need to have _____." Whatever it is you think you can't do without is your god...period. That is your treasure and there your heart is.

Are you content with what God has given? Are you content if no one ever sings your praises or takes notice of you? Are you satisfied with a quiet life of thankless and ordinary service to your neighbor? Or will you only be happy if you accomplish something praiseworthy by worldly measures?

Practically speaking, your worries can't change anything. They only drive you further into despair because they drive you further away from the arms of your Father, the very same Father who has clothed you in the heavenly garments of Jesus' righteousness which does far more than give you superficial and fading beauty. It actually covers the ugliness of your sin so that you don't need to hide your face in shame when God your Father looks at you. This same Father gives you your daily bread to fill your belly. And consider how absolutely delicious food can be! There isn't much point in that. It serves no real practical purpose. After all, if you're hungry you'll eat. But the Lord wants you to enjoy it! He created your tastebuds so that you could experience and delight in sweet desserts, bold coffees, and savory smoked brisket. And yet those are nothing when compared to the food given in Holy Communion that fills the soul with peace and comfort, that delivers to you the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. What of your worrying caused God to do any of that? None.

Stop worrying. God the Father loves you. He created you and He created your needs because He wants to take care of you. He will. He does. And He alone. You are no flower. God didn't create you in His image and condemn His Son to your death to simply then cast you off into the fires of hell, let alone keep you from your daily bread. You don't need to change the world. You don't need people to notice you or praise you. You don't need to be something incredible. You are free to simply be what God has created you to be, to live quietly serving your neighbors in the various vocations you have been given. Your beauty is in Christ and that beauty, the beauty which He gives you abundantly is enough.

In the Name of +Jesus. Amen.